

(Mrs. CLINTON) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2633, a bill to provide for the safe redeployment of United States troops from Iraq.

S. 2634

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2634, a bill to require a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates.

S. 2636

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2636, a bill to provide needed housing reform.

S. 2643

At the request of Mr. SUNUNU, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2643, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate regulations to control hazardous air pollutant emissions from electric utility steam generating units.

S. 2650

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2650, a bill to provide for a 5-year carryback of certain net operating losses and to suspend the 90 percent alternative minimum tax limit on certain net operating losses.

S. RES. 454

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 454, a resolution designating the month of March 2008 as "MRSA Awareness Month".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS RECEIVED DURING RECESS

By Mr. SALAZAR:

S. 2656. A bill to prohibit the transport of hydrolysate from the Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colorado, to an off-site location; to the Committee on Armed Services under authority of the order of the Senate of 02/14/2008.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that will help us achieve swift and safe destruction of the chemical weapons stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado. Congressman JOHN SALAZAR and Congressman MARK UDALL are introducing similar legislation today in the House.

The Pueblo Chemical Depot is home to 780,000 munitions filled with over 2,600 tons of liquid mustard agent—around 8.5 percent of the original U.S. chemical stockpile. The munitions sit in 96 high security igloos as they await disassembly and destruction.

The congressionally ratified Chemical Weapons Convention mandates that these munitions be destroyed by 2012. Unfortunately, the Department of Defense is woefully behind in fulfilling its responsibilities because it consistently underfunds a program that is essential to our national security and to the safety of nearby communities.

Every year we have to fight to put money back into the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, ACWA, program, the authority that is overseeing the destruction operation at Pueblo and at the Blue Grass Army Depot, in Kentucky. But, thanks to Congressional intervention, we have succeeded in getting the program moving. Last year Congress allocated over \$400 million for weapons destruction at the Pueblo Chemical Depot and the Blue Grass Army Depot. I want to thank Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member MCCAIN of the Armed Services Committee, Chairman INOUE and Ranking Member STEVENS of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, and Chairman DORGAN and Ranking Member HUTCHISON of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee for all their help.

If you visit the Pueblo Chemical Depot today, you will see that contractors have begun to lay the utilities and foundations for the processing facility that will treat the agent. And you will see that they have begun construction of the biotreatment facility, which will treat the hydrolysate that is the byproduct of the mustard neutralization process. It is a welcome sight to finally see earth moving. In addition to the funding that Congress restored in fiscal year 2008 for chemical weapons destruction, we also passed legislation to set a hard deadline of 2017 for the Department of Defense to complete all chemical weapons destruction activities.

It is no secret that DOD is going to miss the 2012 treaty deadline for weapons destruction at Pueblo. That's what happens when you drag your feet and

fail to put adequate resources behind a program. But the law we passed last year says that even if they miss the 2012 deadline, the Department of Defense shall complete work on the destruction of the entire stockpile of lethal chemical agents and munitions absolutely no later than 2017. Every six months, the department has to report to Congress on the progress they are making, what resources are needed, and how much funding is programmed to fulfill this requirement.

For those of us who have been fighting this fight for the Pueblo site, the hard deadline of 2017 is a dramatic improvement. At the pace that we were moving under administration's funding projections last year, destruction activities there were expected to be completed sometime in 2021. 2021.

This is absurd, especially with DOD's own admission that with higher funding levels they could complete destruction at Pueblo a full five years earlier than that.

I am proud that this 2017 deadline has been signed into law and I look forward to working with the Department of Defense to ensure that the U.S. Government meets this legal obligation.

Unfortunately, we still have more work to do to see that these chemical weapons are destroyed as swiftly and safely as possible. For one thing, we will have to continue to hold DOD's feet to the fire to ensure that they are devoting adequate resources to chemical weapons destruction.

We will also have to work to help make the chemical weapons destruction process proceed as smoothly, safely, and expeditiously as possible. This means watching to make sure that DOD does not get bogged down in bureaucracy or red tape that could cause delays.

There is a real danger of this at the Pueblo Site, where the Department of Defense is yet again studying whether it should ship hydrolysate, a byproduct of neutralizing mustard agent, to an off-site location for destruction. Hydrolysate is a hazardous waste that must be subjected to a biotreatment process to make it non-hazardous.

At Pueblo, they have already begun construction of an on site biotreatment facility to neutralize the hydrolysate. This is great news. It is the simplest solution and, according to two recent studies, the fastest way to treat all the hydrolysate.

These two studies, completed in 2007, both concluded that shipping hydrolysate off-site would yield few, if any, cost-savings and would likely result in litigation, strong public opposition, and potential delays to chemical weapons destruction. An analysis conducted by Mitretek found that "a decision for off-site treatment will probably result in litigation of the CD at Pueblo, resulting in extensive delays. Every month of delay costs roughly \$15-\$16 million. Any delay over 6 months, regardless of cause, would be expected to erase all possible savings, even under the most optimistic assumptions."

The report by Lean Six Sigma concluded that off-site destruction would actually cost more and could result in as much as a five-year delay in chemical weapons destruction at Pueblo.

Given the conclusions of these recent studies on hydrolysate destruction, I am perplexed that the Department is conducting yet another study on the potential cost savings of hydrolysate destruction. It is unclear to me what questions remain unanswered. These studies clearly show that shipping hydrolysate off-site raises risks of permitting delays or litigation. With a 2017 deadline to meet, the Department of Defense can't afford a permitting delay that sets the project off course.

The bill I am introducing today is very simple. It prohibits the Secretary of Defense from shipping hydrolysate at the Pueblo Chemical Depot off-site for treatment. This will ensure that DOD can continue to proceed on its current path toward treating hydrolysate on-site. It will help the U.S. Government meet its legal obligation to complete chemical weapons destruction by 2017. And it will provide some certainty to the communities that have waited so long for these chemical weapons to be safely destroyed.

We need to put this potentially costly and dilatory issue behind us and proceed with the safe and swift destruction of our Nation's stockpile of chemical weapons.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KERRY:

S. 2658. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to extend from 90 days to one year the period after release of a member from the Armed Forces from active duty during which the member is protected from mortgage foreclosure; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, in the Congress and in Washington these last years, there has been a tragic disconnect between the words spoken about keeping faith with those who wear the uniform of our country, and the actions actually taken to make those words count.

From the tragic conditions at Walter Reed to the backlog of claims at the Veterans Administration, there has been a long list of problems unaddressed—and of problems that arose because someone, somewhere didn't plan ahead to prevent problems for those who sacrifice for all of us.

Today we know from VA estimates that nearly 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night and that nearly 400,000 veterans experience homelessness over the course of a year—a national disgrace to consider that in the richest country on the planet perhaps one out of every three homeless men sleeping in a doorway, alley or box once wore the uniform of our country.

We also know from the Bush administration's own U.S. Labor Department,

that, for example, in 2006, the unemployment rate for young veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was 15 percent, more than triple the national average back then. We know that too many unemployed veterans are National Guard or Reserve troops who were called to duty but found when they came home that their old jobs were gone, that they'd lost their place in line in the local economy, or that the small businesses they'd left behind to serve overseas were in dire straits when they came home.

We know these two challenges—the homeless rates for veterans and the unemployment numbers for veterans—demand big solutions, and we are working to provide them.

But we should also know by now that the least we can do is stop these problems from becoming worse. We have seen a wave of foreclosures send a ripple effect across the economy. By late 2007, 2.5 million mortgages were in default—a 40 percent increase from just 2 years earlier. Last month, foreclosures in Massachusetts alone were up 128 percent from the previous January. In fact, in 2007 alone 1.6 million Americans defaulted on their home loans, and as many as 3.5 million more are expected to do the same by mid-2010.

Every U.S. Senator would agree that the thought of our men and women in uniform being thrown out of their homes because of mortgage foreclosures is miles beyond unacceptable. The question is, in the middle of a national housing crisis and a subprime mortgage collapse, what can be done—done at a minimum—to ensure that Washington acts to shield veterans from becoming the faces of the foreclosure crisis, and from making today's Iraq and Afghanistan veterans the faces of tomorrows' homeless and jobless populations.

We know that the soaring and staggering foreclosure statistics are directly affecting Americans from all walks of life, and our military is not exempt from the pain. The least we can do today is make it clear that we will pay some small measure of respect to veterans by helping them avoid foreclosure. They need more time and greater flexibility as they return to civilian life. The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves has urged us to take preventative action. The Commission found that the transition from military to civilian life extends well beyond the current timelines which forces many service members to focus their attention on imminent foreclosure instead of first locating a competitive job or addressing any mental or physical health concerns that they may be facing.

That is why today I am introducing commonsense legislation that would protect servicemembers and veterans involved in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by securing a longer grace period for payment. My bill would extend the time from 90 days to 1 year the time period that a servicemember

is protected from foreclosure. By extending the deadline to 1 year, I hope we can take one small step to prevent future homelessness throughout the veteran's community.

If America's leaders truly support our troops, we owe them more than a polite thank you and best wishes. We owe them action. We cannot tolerate a pattern in Washington that has persisted for too long—provide lip service about supporting the troops but not the lifesaving body armor they need; talk a good game about veterans but cut funding for their healthcare. It is wrong, and it is time for it to end. We should act now to ensure that those saddled with the burden of the mortgage crisis are not those who have carried the greatest responsibility for America overseas in the fight for freedom. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2658

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE PROTECTION PERIOD FOR SERVICEMEMBERS.

(a) EXTENSION OF PROTECTION PERIOD.—Subsection (c) of section 303 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 533(c)) is amended by striking “90 days” and inserting “one year”.

(b) EXTENSION OF STAY OF PROCEEDINGS PERIOD.—Subsection (b) of such section (50 U.S.C. App. 533(b)) is amended by striking “90 days” and inserting “one year”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to individuals performing a period of military service (as that term is defined in section 101(3) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 511(3))) that begins on or after October 7, 2001.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KERRY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2660. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to ensure that the mission and functions of Regional Transmission Organizations and Independent System Operators include keeping energy costs as low as reasonably possible for consumers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to help protect consumers from high electricity prices that have followed deregulation of electricity markets. I am honored to have many of my colleagues joining me in offering this legislation—Senator SNOWE, Senator KERRY, Senator COLLINS, Senator KENNEDY, and Senator LEAHY.

Market pricing of electricity promised to bring lower costs to consumers. Unfortunately, consumers in organized market regions—those that have a Regional Transmission Organization or